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Best of Emerald Coast 2008

The savvy shoppers, daring diners and otherwise knowledgeable readers of *Emerald Coast Magazine* have voted, choosing their favorites in categories ranging from best brunch to best new business

By Jennifer Walker-Journey | Photos by Scott Holstein

The Academy Awards may be months away, but that won't keep Emerald Coast Magazine from rolling out the red carpet and honoring some very worthy local businesses and personalities for outstanding performances or products in the eighth annual Best Of the Emerald Coast awards.

Each of the honorees was selected by our discriminating judges – you! – who cast ballots in our readers' poll. Once again, a record number of votes were received, and as a result, 100 businesses received top honors. Some on our list are perennial favorites, such as Big Kahuna's Water & Adventure Park and Another Broken Egg Café. Others are welcome newcomers.

The winners will be celebrated at the Best Of the Emerald Coast awards ceremony at Destin Commons on Saturday, Oct. 18 from 6 to 10:30 p.m. We invite you to join us at the outdoor festival, where we'll sample products and services from the best of the best. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$35 at the door, and proceeds benefit the Destin Family YMCA. For more information, call (850) 837-8440.

But first, ladies and gentlemen, we give you the winners of the 2008 Best Of the Emerald Coast ...

Food & Beverage

Best Mexican/Latin American Restaurant | *Pepito's Mexican Restaurant*

Authentic Mexican food in a relaxed, traditional atmosphere is what you will find at Pepito's in the heart of Destin. Its reasonable prices and friendly staff are sure to make you shout "Olé!"

Best Gourmet/Food Shop | *The Fresh Market*

Shopping at The Fresh Market is not a chore but a culinary experience. Whether selecting fresh meats and seafood, browsing fine wines or sampling hard-to-find gourmet foods, The Fresh Market is sure to make any shopping trip an adventure.

Best Fine Dining | *Seagar's Prime Steaks and Seafood*

Regarded by customers and critics alike as one of the most elegant settings along the Emerald Coast, this five-star restaurant specializes in prime beef, fresh seafood and top-notch service.

Best Sushi | *Osaka Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Bar*

Designed to look like a Japanese temple, Osaka Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Bar offers an extensive list of sushi favorites that can be ordered either in the restaurant's quiet sushi bar or in the lively hibachi dining room.

Best Outdoor Dining | *Dewey Destin Seafood & Restaurant*

For fresh seafood and fine "land food" in a relaxed, open-air environment, drop by Dewey Destin Seafood & Restaurant. Al fresco diners can enjoy unbeatable sunsets and tranquil bay breezes at this above-water eatery.

Best Appetizer | *Bonefish Grill*

What better way to start a meal than with a small plate of Bang Bang Shrimp or a refreshing Ceviche Martini from Bonefish Grill? Whatever appetizer you choose here, at the bar or in the main dining room, you can't go wrong.

Best Asian Restaurant | *P.F. Chang's China Bistro*

This newcomer to the winners list serves classic Chinese dishes with a modern bistro ambiance. Chefs use Chinese principles to attain harmony in taste, texture, color and aroma in each dish, from the ever-popular Chang's Chicken in Soothing Lettuce Wraps to the spicy Kung Pao Shrimp.

Best Bagel | *Not Just Bagels*

Bagel lovers rejoice. Not Just Bagels offers 22 gourmet bagels, breads and pastries baked fresh daily at this Destin shop. But as the name states, bagels are not the only item you will find on the menu. Lattes and flavored coffees also are available.

Best Bakery | *Donut Hole Bakery Cafe*

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For 30 years, this well-loved Destin bakery has warmed the hearts – and bellies – of locals and visitors alike. The Donut Hole recently opened a second location in Santa Rosa Beach. Best known for its doughnuts, the eatery also boasts an extensive breakfast, lunch and dinner menu.

Best Barbecue | Jim 'N Nick's Bar-B-Q

Good old lip-smackin' barbecue is an art few can duplicate outside the Deep South. Jim 'N Nick's offers authentic favorites such as sticky, slow-cooked baby back and spare ribs, hand-pulled pork and sliced Angus beef brisket. It remains true to its menu's claim, "You can taste tradition in every bite."

Best Breakfast | *Another Broken Egg Café*

The warm and inviting atmosphere at Another Broken Egg has kept it tops for Best Breakfast every year since "Best Of" began. Whether for breakfast or lunch, it is no surprise that eggs have a starring role on this restaurant's menu. Try the blackberry grits for an unexpected treat.

Best Brunch | *Rutherford's 465*

Start your day off right with the Grande Vista Sunday Brunch, featuring everything from Steak & Eggs to a Louisiana Crab Cake Breakfast, paired with bread, a choice of stone-ground cheese grits or hash browns, and assorted breakfast refreshments. Mimosa, anyone?

Best Casual Dining | *ZOËS Kitchen*

Designed to be an extension of founder and avid gardener Zoë Cassimus' home kitchen, ZOËS Kitchen succeeds in serving up healthy, delicious food for the whole family. From the Chicken & Slaw Pita to the grilled turkey-and-Swiss Gruben, customers are sure to feel at home in this eatery.

Best Catering | *Sarah K's Gourmet*

"Easy" is the key word for Sarah K's Gourmet, and likely the secret that has made the catering company such a hit. Whether it's dinner for the family or a feast for a large party, Sarah K's makes enjoying delicious, nutritious gourmet meals a breeze.

Best Chef | *Tim Creehan*

Creehan is no stranger to success. With an impressive lineup of restaurants, including Beach Walk and Creehan's Copper Grill, as well as cookbooks, spices and business partnerships, it is no surprise to see that the Emerald Coast's most celebrated chef once again has won this coveted category.

Best Coffee | *Starbucks Coffee*

There is a reason why there seems to be a Starbucks Coffee shop on every street corner. As the country's leading coffee roaster, retailer and coffee brand, the coffeehouse has plenty of patrons who cannot start their day without a cup o' Starbucks joe!

Best Dessert | *Tommy Bahama Tropical Café*

This refined but relaxed restaurant ends its island-style meals with tantalizing indulgences such as Wha' Jamaican Chocolate Cake, Blackbeard's Butterscotch and Barbados Brownie.

Best French Restaurant | *Café Provence*

This French country bistro takes diners on a culinary tour de France, serving up traditional favorites such as exotic escargots, entrées bathed in sumptuous cream sauces, picturesque desserts and a to-die-for wine list. Once again, Café Provence receives a resounding "Ooh-la-la!"

Best Grocery Store | *Publix Super Markets*

This grocery chain was founded in Florida nearly 80 years ago and has grown to encompass more than 900 stores nationwide. According to our reader poll, shopping is still a pleasure at Publix.

Best Hamburger | *McGuire's Irish Pub*

This turn-of-the-century New York Irish saloon-style restaurant offers 25 trimmings for its Steak Burger. Made of three-quarters of a pound of steak trimmings custom-ground by the pub's own butchers, this burger is an easy choice for No. 1.

Best Happy Hour | *Blue Point Fish Club*

Blue Point Fish Club at Destin Commons gives its customers something to smile about. Tasty cocktails, good music and a comfortable atmosphere make happy hour here even happier.

Best Ice Cream Shop | *Cold Stone Creamery*

For the ultimate ice cream experience, our readers prefer Cold Stone Creamery. Made with the highest-quality ingredients and hand-mixed on a frozen slab of granite, it's hard to resist this cool indulgence.

Best Italian Restaurant | *Fat Clemenza's Brick Oven Pizzeria*

What is a group of guys from an Italian neighborhood in Chicago to do when they move to the Emerald Coast and can't find authentic Italian fare? Open their own restaurant, of course! Fat Clemenza's promises not to compromise on quality, and as a result, the restaurant is a big hit here.

Best Locally Owned Restaurant | *Callahan's Restaurant and Deli*

Reasonable prices and generous portions make this restaurant a local hot spot. Callahan's offers burgers, reubens, made-to-order sandwiches, pastas, salads and nightly dinner specials including prime rib and seafood.

Best Margarita | *Cantina Laredo*

It's no difficult task for Cantina Laredo to serve up the best margarita in town. The chic Mexican eatery boasts a line of signature tequilas including triple-distilled and aged brands that make sipping margaritas an unforgettable experience.

Best Martini | *Marina Café*

Marina Café offers a contemporary, adult setting with breathtaking views of the Destin Harbor. A favorite spot to imbibe, Marina's bar menu highlights 16 types of tempting martinis, including

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Best Outdoor Bar | *AJ's Seafood & Oyster Bar*

It may be this landmark's stunning harbor views that lure customers in, but the drink specials, fresh oysters and live entertainment keep them there. Visit AJ's and find out why it is known as the home of world-famous fun!

Best Pizza | *Helen Back Café*

Helen Back may be known by regulars as "party central," but it is recognized throughout the Emerald Coast for its pizzas. It's also known for its philanthropy: Throughout 2008, the restaurant is donating 25 cents for every large pizza sold to the Special Operations Warrior Fund.

Best Romantic Restaurant | *Zampieri's Harbor Grille*

Zampieri's adds a romantic twist to dining with stunning harbor views, a world-class chef, an extensive wine list and live entertainment. If your date does not "wow" you, the dinner presentation surely will.

Best Sandwich Shop | *Jersey Mike's Subs*

Submarine sandwiches are made to order with fresh baked bread and premium-quality ingredients at Jersey Mike's Subs. With two locations along the Emerald Coast, traditional New Jersey-style subs are never far away.

Best Seafood Market | *Destin Ice Seafood Market & Deli*

Destin Ice is a longtime favorite for vacationers and locals in search of the freshest locally caught fish, shrimp, crab and oysters. Other favorites include homemade seafood salads and tasty dips.

Best Seafood Restaurant | *Harbor Docks*

Only the freshest seafood is served at Harbor Docks restaurant. Each day's fresh catch is available in a variety of preparations – fried, sautéed or broiled, for a start. Harbor Docks also is the only restaurant in town to brine and smoke its own tuna. The sushi bar and hibachi grill are stellar.

Best Service | *Ruth's Chris Steak House*

Experience the unsurpassed service provided by the staff at this white-tablecloth steakhouse. Steeped in tradition, the restaurant takes pride in training its employees to meet every diner's needs with grace.

Best Sports Bar | *Johnny O'Quigley's Irish Pub & Grille*

Have a jolly good time cheering on your favorite team at Johnny O'Quigley's. This sports bar and restaurant has 48 television sets lining its walls. Drink specials, tasty appetizers and entrées make it the perfect place to watch the big game.

Best Steakhouse | *Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar*

Fleming's features the finest prime beef – marbled, aged and broiled at 1,600 degrees to seal in the juices. Each dish is artfully prepared and graciously served in a refined atmosphere. Ask your server for a recommendation of one of the 100 wines by the glass to complement your meal.

Best Wine List | *Vin'tij Wine Boutique*

Sample the world's finest wines at Vin'tij Wine Boutique. This market, bar and bistro serves lunch and dinner with impeccable wine pairings from its extensive and progressive collection. Educational classes and events add to this ultimate wine experience.

Best Wine Shop | *Chan's Wine World*

The certified wine specialists at Chan's, located in Destin, Sandestin and Miramar Beach, guide shoppers through the 1,000 wines in stock. Wine tastings and classes make this wine shop a popular choice.

Service Providers

Best Interior Designer | *Susan Lovelace*

Interior designer Lovelace relies on years of experience and knowledge of art and architectural history to guide her skilled eye. As president and owner of Lovelace Interiors, she believes that each project – regardless of size – deserves special attention.

Best Veterinarian | *Airport Veterinary Clinic*

Kelly Haeusler, D.V.M., and her dedicated staff at Airport Veterinary Clinic in Destin are the cat's meow, according to Emerald Coast Magazine readers. This full-service clinic has been top-ranked among locals for years.

Best Pest Control | *Bryan Pest Control*

With more than three decades of experience, this three-generation family-owned company is focused on quality pest management service throughout the Emerald Coast. Expect fast, reliable service with Bryan Pest Control.

Best Janitorial Service | *Specialty Building Maintenance*

This professional janitorial company stands out from its competition by offering a full range of services for both businesses and homes. From office cleaning and construction cleanup to pressure washing and floor care, Specialty Building Maintenance is always available to meet its clients' needs.

Best Dentist | *Dennis Lichorwic, D.M.D.*

Lichorwic gives his cosmetic dentistry patients something to smile about at his comfortable and friendly practice, and he also gives back to the community. It's no wonder he has been named the Emerald Coast's best dentist year after year.

Best AC/Heating | *Climate Makers of Northwest Florida*

When it's hot, Climate Makers makes sure you are not. This heating and air conditioning business has been family-owned and operated for more than 15 years and still offers superb repair, service, replacement or maintenance to air conditioning, heating and indoor air quality systems.

Best Accounting Firm | *Carr, Riggs & Ingram*

Strength and passion make the certified public accounting firm of Carr, Riggs & Ingram stand out from its competitors. With some of the most experienced professionals in its three Emerald Coast locations, the firm promises to provide each client with the best service possible.

Best Architect | *Dougherty + Chavez*

The architect team of Dougherty + Chavez combines imagination and talent to build some of the Emerald Coast's most exquisitely designed plans. Among its many claims to fame is The Village of Baytowne Wharf at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort.

Best Automobile Dealership | *Sam Taylor Buick-Cadillac*

A landmark on the Miracle Strip, Sam Taylor Buick-Cadillac is a full-service auto dealer. Whether you're shopping for a new or used vehicle, in need of a repair or auto part, or just researching financing options, the friendly and professional staff are always ready to assist.

Best Boat Sales and Service | *Legendary Marine*

Legendary Marine has become a legend in its own right, earning accolades for its excellent service from both the community and industry insiders. This Marine Certified Dealership offers everything from new and pre-owned boats, a parts and service department, and boat storage, to name a few.

Best Boating Experience | *Legacy Boating Club*

Legacy gives its members all the pleasures of owning a boat without the hassles that come with ownership. Enjoy unlimited adventures as a member of this elite club.

Best Builder/Contractor | *David & Dad*

This award-winning father-and-son team has worked together since the 1970s. With more than 75 years of combined experience, Robert and Bob David construct high-end custom homes and are the premier and preferred builder for Heritage Plantation Golf & Country Club in Laurel Hill.

Best Car Wash | *Executive Car Wash*

Get the CEO treatment at Destin's only full-service, soft-cloth car wash and detailing provider. This family-owned business takes pride in catering to all your vehicle needs, from detailing to carpet cleaning.

Best Chiropractor | *Alan Payne, D.C.*

Dr. Payne's gentle adjustments, state-of-the-art techniques and a warm and friendly staff have made him your favorite chiropractor for seven years. Payne offers chiropractic, massage, yoga, ionic footbaths and BioMeridian nutritional analysis.

Best Customer Service | *Destin Air Charters*

Why worry with commercial flights to get you to your next vacation or business destination? Destin Air Charters offers private, first-class air travel to anywhere in the United States and the Caribbean.

Best Dry Cleaner | *Bangkok Cleaners*

Trust your most delicate dry cleaning to Northwest Florida's largest dry cleaner. Bangkok makes it easy for customers by offering free pickup and delivery.

Best Event Planner | *Destination Management*

Total customer satisfaction is No. 1 with Destin Management. The special events firm is dedicated to creating and coordinating custom meetings, conventions and parties along the Emerald Coast.

Best Eye Doctor | *Sam Poppell, M.D.*

All eyes are on Sam Poppell, M.D., who founded the Emerald Coast Eye Institute to bring modern eye care to the area. Committed to restoring and preserving vision, Poppell remains a favorite among his patients.

Best Flooring (Carpet/Tile) | *Destin Flooring America*

Whether shopping for ceramic or vinyl tiles, area rugs, hardwoods or carpeting, Destin Flooring America's Five Star Selection System and Confidence Plus warranty make choosing the right floor for your home or business effortless.

Best Florist | *Destin Floral Designs*

From the simple elegance of a single red rose to exquisite bouquets of cut flowers, Destin Floral Designs takes exceptional pride in gifts of joy. Discover the artistic talents of master floral designer Joy Segno and her son, Raphael.

Best Gym/Health Club | *Gold's Gym*

For eight years, Gold's Gym has reigned as the best gym/health club among Emerald Coast Magazine readers. With the finest equipment and fitness knowledge available, Gold's has inspired thousands to achieve their potential. (It's always swimsuit season on the Emerald Coast.)

Best Hair Removal Clinic | *American Laser Center*

Armed with cutting-edge hair removal research and technology, American Laser Center has helped its customers say goodbye to razors and tweezers forever. Its dedication to customer satisfaction and safety has won praise from its avid fans.

Best Home Repair | *Handyman Connection*

For every household need that may arise – installation, building, repair or maintenance – turn to the experts at Handyman Connection. Offering dependable, skilled craftsmanship and unbeatable customer service, Handyman Connection is a company you know you can trust.

Best Interior Design Firm/ASID | *Sugar Beach Interiors*

Sugar Beach Interiors attributes its success to a commitment to excellent customer service. For each project, this team of professional licensed designers promises careful consideration to every detail.

Best Landscaping/Lawn Service | *Barefoot Lawn Care*

Friendly, punctual service is what you get when you call on the qualified, experienced professionals at Barefoot Lawn Care. This landscaping and lawn service company offers a long list of services that will add curb appeal to any location.

Best Limo Service | *654-LIMO*

Florida's premier limousine rental company offers a wide range of vehicles for the most luxurious chauffeured transportation around. Ride in style in a Hummer, Navigator or Escalade with 654-LIMO.

Best Medical Group/Provider | *Sacred Heart on the Emerald Coast*

Since opening in 2003, this state-of-the-art medical center continues to improve the health of the community at large. Sacred Heart on the Emerald Coast offers a wide range of medical and surgical services, including intensive care, general and orthopedic surgery, cardiology, cancer care, comprehensive radiology and laboratory services, rehabilitation, 24-hour emergency care, women's health and maternity care.

Best Photographer | *Tommy Crow*

The images by photographer Tommy Crow of Tommy Crow Studios in Seaside invite curiosity and imagination from those who view his work. With more than 25 years of experience in capturing awe-inspiring photographs, Crow produces works for commercial businesses that can be described as clean, sophisticated, classic and bold.

Best Plastic Surgeon | *Scott Ennis, M.D., F.A.C.S.*

Cosmetic surgeon Ennis has been recognized for his "tireless pursuit of perfection" and "attention to detail." He puts these traits into practice at Destin Plastic Surgery, where he serves the Florida Panhandle and patients from all over the world.

Best Pool Company | *Cox Pools*

This family-owned business has been making a splash in Northwest Florida for more than 50 years. Cox Pools continues its commitment to quality service by providing personal pool design assistance, as well as a full line of pool maintenance accessories.

Best Rug Retailer | *Oasis Rugs*

For the most extensive collection of rugs, visit the showroom of Oasis Rugs. This Gulf Coast retailer offers both traditional and contemporary styles from the world's most respected rug makers.

Best Travel Agent | *Davis Travel & Tours*

The friendly travel agents at Davis Travel & Tours are ready to serve as your personal vacation planners, offering monthly specials, group tours, cruises and packages.

Best Vacation Rental Service Firm | *Newman-Dailey Resort Properties*

Let Newman-Dailey help you find the perfect accommodations for your vacation getaway. This two-year award-winning, Destin-based management company has provided memories for its guests with the finest rental homes and condos across the Emerald Coast since 1985.

Best Wedding Planner | *It's A "Shore" Thing Wedding & Event Planning*

Make the most of your magical day by relying on the professionals at It's a "Shore" Thing Wedding & Event Planning. From elaborate galas to intimate ceremonies, this party-planning firm provides customized services tailored to meet your every need.

Best Wedding/Reception Venue | *Emerald Grande at HarborWalk Village*

This distinctive wedding facility overlooking the Destin Harbor and Gulf of Mexico is perfect for a picturesque indoor or outdoor wedding. In-house catering, audiovisual and production support, and an on-site florist make wedding planning a breeze.

Shopping

Best Gift Shop | *The Zoo Gallery*

An eclectic collection of framed art, pottery, jewelry, furniture, accessories and apparel makes The Zoo Gallery a favorite among locals and vacationers. With locations in Destin, Sandestin and Grayton Beach, it has become known as the "hip-hop happening" shop on the Gulf Coast.

Best Men's Clothing | *Charles Alexander*

Charles Alexander takes men's fashion to a new level in Destin. A newcomer on the Emerald Coast Parkway, this high-end men's clothing store owned by Deke Lee (pictured), specializes in designer clothing, shoes and accessories.

Best Nursery/Garden Center | *The Home Depot*

The Home Depot's garden center brings out everyone's green thumb. Whether shopping for seasonal flowers or garden accessories to decorate your own backyard, the helpful staff at Home Depot is always eager to please.

Best Antique Store | *Smith's Antiques Mall & Interiors Market*

The 25,000-square-foot Destin-area showroom beautifully displays antique and interiors wares of 90 dealers from throughout the country. Known for quality, quantity and variety, Smith's Antiques Mall & Interiors Market has received rave reviews from customers ever since opening its doors in 1993.

Best Beachwear Retailer | *Beach Bums*

For a huge selection of all the major swimwear and beach apparel brands you love, look no

further than Beach Bums. This Destin retailer also sells its merchandise throughout the country at its online store at beachbumsflorida.com.

Best Children's Clothing Store | *Hugs & Hissyfits Children's Boutique*

This children's boutique, located in Fort Walton Beach and Destin, is as adorable as its name, offering a variety of designer clothing lines for boys and girls. A popular choice for baby gifts, Hugs & Hissyfits has won the "Best Children's Clothing Store" honor every year since 2004.

Best Consignment Shop | *Designer Consigners of Destin*

For gently used, designer-brand furniture and home accents, look no further than Designer Consigners of Destin. The friendly staff is always eager to please and ready to offer decorating advice.

Best Eyeglass Store | *The Eye Gallery*

The Eye Gallery is the place to go for the most distinctive eyewear. This shop offers the very latest in sunglasses and prescription eyewear, with lines that preserve the timeless and flatter the beautiful.

Best Furniture Store | *Sandcastle Designs*

This complete home furnishings center is not your ordinary furniture store. With more than 600 furniture and accessory manufacturers to choose from, it is easy to find styles to match every taste and budget.

Best Intimate Apparel | *Victoria's Secret*

The secret is out. Originally designed as a lingerie store where men could feel comfortable shopping for their wives or girlfriends, Victoria's Secret has grown to be overwhelmingly popular among women as well. With more than 1,000 stores across the country, this intimate apparel shop offers glamorous lingerie and beauty products.

Best Jewelry Store | *Destin Jewelers*

Let Destin Jewelers add a little sparkle to your day with a large selection of jewelry, from precious stones to playful accent pieces. This favorite jewelry store offers jewels from such top designers as Philip Stein, Judith Ripka and Yvel.

Best Locally Owned Retailer | *Sporty Lady*

This family-owned and managed swimwear and sportswear store has been the Emerald Coast's premier swimwear retailer since 1978. With more than 10,000 styles, the store's selection is unparalleled.

Best Men's Shoes | *Aldo*

Step into comfort and style with Aldo shoes for men. Offering sandals, boots and dress shoes, there is no need to look elsewhere for men's designer footwear.

Best Sporting Goods Store | *Bass Pro Shops*

Few sportsmen can resist this two-story, 50,000-square-foot shop in Destin Commons. Bass Pro Shops offers an expansive selection of gear and gadgets to suit every outdoorsman.

Best Toy Store | *Learning Express*

Learning Express is the leader in specialty toys and children's gifts. Each member of the friendly sales staff is knowledgeable and eager to provide expert advice to parents looking for the perfect educational, enjoyable toy.

Best Wedding Shop | *Simply Elegant Bridal*

For more than two decades, Simply Elegant Bridal has helped thousands of brides outfit their entire bridal party with the largest selection of bridal and bridesmaid's gowns and the best selection of tuxedos for the groom.

Best Women's Accessories | *Private Gallery*

Be seen in the hottest, trendiest accessories from Private Gallery in Destin. With outstanding customer service, this boutique guarantees "a fun shopping experience for all ages and all price ranges."

Best Women's Clothing | *Today's*

Located in the Shoppes of Paradise Key in Destin, this women's clothing store makes shopping fun with Fashion Party Events and special offers. Find today's most popular styles at Today's.

Best Women's Shoes | *Shoo Fly Shoo*

When in Destin, Shoo Fly Shoo is a must-stop for shoe lovers. This foot fancier carries brands such as Beverly Feldman, Imagine by Vince Camuto, Cordani and Costa Blanca.

Entertainment

Best Local Attraction | *Florida's Gulfarium*

For more than 50 years, Florida's Gulfarium has provided its guests with an entertaining and educational experience of the marine world around them. Offering sea life shows, attractions and special programs, this local landmark is a must-see.

Best Place To Take the Kids

Big Kahuna's Water & Adventure Park

Make a splash with the entire family at Big Kahuna's. This spectacular adventure and water park offers a host of signature rides and slides that guarantee hours of cool thrills.

Best Place To Be Seen | *Seabreeze Jazz Festival*

Spring has not sprung until the annual, weekend-long Seabreeze Jazz Festival rolls around. This popular series has quickly become one of the top jazz events in the country. In 2009, the festival moves to a new venue – Panama City Beach's Pier Park Amphitheater.

Best Art Gallery | *Gallery NU Fine Arts*

This Grand Boulevard gallery is as exciting, approachable and evolving as the sophisticated artwork it carries. With moving art walls and changing interior palettes and furnishings, Gallery NU morphs with each new featured exhibit.

Best Golf Course

Regatta Bay Golf & Country Club

With a course that winds through breathtaking nature preserves and runs beside Choctawhatchee Bay, Regatta Bay is truly a golfer's paradise. Teeing off at this 6,984-yard, par-72 course is, naturally, the best.

Best Musician/Vocalist/Band | *Jones & Company*

Locals cannot stop singing the praises of Jones & Company, one of Florida's most popular bands. Playing everything from jazz and R&B to reggae and classics, this group is a favorite entertainment choice for corporate events or intimate weddings.

Best Place To Go Dancing | *Nighttown*

The ultimate dance club, Nighttown is open seven nights a week, with nightly drink specials and two rooms of entertainment. The Main Room is the center of the action, with a 14,000-square-foot dance floor, a 180-square-foot video wall and eight 18-inch woofers.

Best Place To Watch a Sunset | *Whale's Tail Beach Bar & Grill*


Located directly on the beach at Seascape Resort in Destin, this casual bar and restaurant has been a favorite spot to gaze at the Gulf of Mexico for more than 20 years. Enjoying great food and cold beverages on this beach overlooking the Gulf is an experience you will not want to miss.

Best Splurge For Her And Him | *McCaskill & Company*

Owners Bill and Elizabeth Campbell will delight you with intricate details of each and every piece of jewelry at McCaskill & Company. A fine product assortment and attention to customer service have made this one of the best jewelry and watch retailers in America.

Best New Business in 2008 | *Cabana Café*

This new Destin eatery has won over customers with its cheerful décor and gourmet menu. Maas Coffee Roasters of Fort Walton Beach and Destin's Marble Slab Creamery have partnered with Cabana Café to further enhance the restaurant's offerings.

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